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The situation in the Middle East

Measures to eliminate international terrorism

Security Council
Fifty-seventh year

Letter dated 19 September 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I wish to draw your attention to the latest incidents in the Palestinian campaign of terrorism directed against the citizens of Israel.

This afternoon, at approximately 1 p.m. (local time), a Palestinian suicide bomber boarded a public bus and detonated a powerful explosive charge as the bus passed in front of the Great Synagogue in central Tel Aviv. The force of the blast blew the roof off the bus and scattered body parts, glass and debris throughout the bustling downtown district at an hour when the area was crowded with pedestrians and workers on their lunch break. According to the latest reports, five people were killed and more than 60 were injured, several of them critically. The terrorist organizations Hamas and Islamic Jihad were both reported to have claimed responsibility.

Today's bombing comes one day after a string of attacks on Wednesday that killed three Israelis and left another three wounded. Early in the morning, security forces discovered the charred body of David Buhbut, aged 67. Buhbut, who was reported missing on Tuesday night, had been tortured for several hours before his body was discarded in a dumpster. Shortly before 3 p.m. (local time), Palestinian terrorists shot and killed Yosef Ajami, aged 36, as he was driving his car en route to Baka al-Gharbiya. And in the evening, policeman Moshe Hizkiyahu was killed when responding to a report of a suspicious individual near the Umm el-Fahm Junction. As Officer Hizkiyahu approached him, the man blew himself up. Two others were wounded in the attack for which Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility.

After a period of relative quiet resulting from Israel's daily efforts to intercept and thwart attempted attacks, it has become apparent that Palestinian terrorist groups are once again stepping up their activities in preparation for another wave of attacks. The terrorist act of the past 48 hours have come in the wake of steps taken

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by Israel to alleviate the humanitarian conditions of the Palestinian people by easing the security precautions it had implemented. Terrorists have responded by taking advantage of those openings in order to perpetrate further attacks. That those attacks have also come after recent initiatives to reduce the level of violence and clear a path back to the negotiating table, including the recent meeting of the Quartet in New York, is further proof of the intention of terrorist organizations to scuttle any attempts to revive the peace process.

If the Palestinian leadership truly wishes to achieve a peaceful settlement of the conflict, its only course of action is to take action against those groups that seek to violently undercut such a settlement. The continued unwillingness of the Palestinian leadership to take any genuine steps to prevent attacks on Israelis, even after more than two years of hostilities, remains the primary obstacle to the success of efforts to bring the parties back to the negotiating process.

Israel calls on the international community to condemn in the strongest terms those criminal acts of terrorism, as well as the ongoing support and involvement of the current Palestinian leadership in such acts. Only an end to the heinous campaign of Palestinian terrorism, with its terrible cost in Israeli and Palestinian lives, can restore our hope of achieving a final settlement, one that will provide for the national aspirations of the Palestinian people while ensuring peace and security for Israel.

I submit the present letter in follow-up to numerous letters detailing the campaign of Palestinian terrorism that began in September 2000.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter circulated as an official document of the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly, under agenda items 36 and 162.

(*Signed*) Yehuda **Lancry**
Permanent Representative